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Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 11205 281428Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------123773 281432Z /45
O 281353Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9242
INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
SECDEF WASHDC
JCS WASHDC
CNO
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON
CINCPAC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
COMIDEASTFOR
CINCPACFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 11205

EXDIS - MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: OCLR, US, SO
SUBJECT: NAVAL SHIP VISIT TO MOGADISCIO

REF: STATE 190599

1. CHIEF POLOFF CALLED ON MOFA UNDER SECRETARY MAITHA JULY 28 TO MAKE DEMARCHE AS INSTRUCTED REFTEL. EMBOFF STRESSED FACT US GOVERNMENT WANTED TELL GOK IN ADVANCE OF PROPOSED VISIT, BECAUSE OF CLOSENESS OR OUR RELATIONSHIP AND HIGH VALUE WE PLACE ON IT.
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2. EMBOFF ALSO EMPHASIZED OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF US NAVY MIDDLE EAST FORCE AND VALUE OF ADDITIONAL PORT OF CALL, GIVEN VERY LIMITED PORT AVAILABILITY IN THIS REGION. NOTED ETHIOPIAN REFUSAL OF ACCESS. EMBOFF ADDED WE WOULD INFORM GOK OF EXACT VISIT DATES ONCE FIRMLY SCHEDULED.

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3. MAITHA ASKED WHETHER INITIATIVE WAS SOMALI OR OURS, TO WHICH EMBOFF REPLIED THAT SDR HAD INDICATED TO US THAT REQUEST FOR VISIT WOULD BE FAVORABLY RECEIVED.

4. MAITHA THEN COMMENTED THAT GOK HAD NO PROBLEM WITH US "WARMING UP TO SOMALIA" AS "YOUR TASK IS BIGGER THAN OURS." HE CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT SAID BARRE "CHANGED FRIENDS LIKE SHOES" AND MAY WISH CULTIVATE US IN EFFORT ALIENATE US FROM KENYA AND ETHIOPIA. EMBOFF RESPONDED THAT WE WOULD CERTAINLY REMAIN ALERT TO POSSIBILITY OF SUCH ULTERIOR MOTIVE, STRESSING IMPORTANCE WE PLACED ON FRIENDSHIP WITH KENYA AND REMARKING THAT WE HOPED TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA FOLLOWING RECENT ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR CHAPIN.

5. MAITHA RECOGNIZED THAT GROWING US RELATIONSHIP MIGHT BE POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON SOMALIA. HE COMMENTED THAT EXPANDING US RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMALIA MIGHT LEAD TO BETTER RELATIONS IN HORN, EXPECIALLY IF US WERE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES, FOR EXAMPLE, PROJECTS ON JUBA AND WEBBI SHIBELI RIVERS.

6. IN CONCLUSION, MAITHA THANKED EMBOFF FOR INFORMATION AND SAID HE WOULD PASS IT ON TO HIS SUPERIORS.

7. COMMENT: EMBASSY KEPT APPROACH LOW-KEY STRESSING NAVY'S OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND PAUCITY AVAILABLE PORTS.
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ALTHOUGH MAITHA'S REACTION SHOWED SOME APPRECIATION OF US POSITION, WE SUSPECT THERE MAY BE SOME MILD UNHAPPINESS AT UPPER LEVELS OF GOK. WE DO NOT, HOWEVER, EXPECT SERIOUS REPRECUSSIONS AS LONG AS VISIT CAN BE DESCRIBED AS OPERATIONAL AND DOES NOT ASSUME PUBLICLY POLITICAL ASPECT.
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